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From: Mears, Mary
Sent: Thur 8/11/2016 3:37:04 PM
Subject: FW: Morning Clips

Sent this first article to OPA, Rupp and Distefano. Thought it might be helpful ahead of your conversation.

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Subject: Morning Clips

Gillibrand 'Grateful' For Upcoming Hearings on Tainted Water

Politico New York

By: Jimmy Vielkind

August 10, 2016

MENANDS — U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand said Wednesday that she is “very grateful” for state and federal hearings that will focus on the presence of toxic chemicals in the water supply of communities like Hoosick Falls. She added that she hopes they will result in “real” medical monitoring for affected residents.

Gillibrand, a Democrat who maintains a house in suburban Troy — several miles from the rural communities of Petersburg and Hoosick Falls, where tests found elevated levels of PFOA in ground water and public water supplies — said she was not satisfied with how the government has handled the issue.

“Frankly, I think the entire government’s response isn’t enough because people have so many questions. The anxiety level is so high,” Gillibrand told reporters after touring a tool-making factory here, part of a push for legislation that would make permanent an Obama administration program that prioritizes certain places for federal funding.

Republicans in Congress have said New York was “sluggish” in responding to the detection of PFOA, a chemical used in the production of Teflon-coated products that has been linked to cancer and immune system disorders.

Officials at the state departments of health and environmental conservation have performed free testing and made medical experts available for residents to review the results.

Another forum is scheduled for Thursday evening for residents in the village of Hoosick Falls, where residents have an average PFOA blood level at 30 times the national average, according to recent tests.

Some residents have complained about past forums, and have said state test results that arrived in the mail did not contain proper context.

Several public health experts this week told POLITICO New York that a state fact sheet distributed to residents downplayed health risks. The Cuomo administration disputed their analysis.

Gillibrand said that dealing with negative health effects in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks

should be a guide, and hoped that early health monitoring would help people get the treatment they need.

When there is uncertainty about health effects, she said, "families have to have the benefit of having doctors that specialize in the type of effects that these chemicals might have on them and their children's lives across their lifetime.

"God forbid, if something does happen, they get the right treatment right away," Gillibrand said. "What the state should do, what the Legislature should do after they have their hearings, is really talk to these polluters and say, we want you to pay for medical monitoring for the life of these residents."

Puerto Rico's Efforts To Stop Zika Are Hampered By Mistrust

NPR

By: Jason Beaubien

August 10, 2016

Puerto Rico is in the midst of one of the worst Zika outbreaks of any region in the northern hemisphere. The island has been reporting roughly 1,500 new cases of Zika each week. Hundreds of pregnant women are already infected, and public health officials say the outbreak in Puerto Rico probably won't start to subside until September or October.

Yet health officials also say efforts to stop the spread of the virus are being hampered by mistrust, indifference and fatigue among residents, over what some view as just the latest tropical disease to hit the island.

At a park in the San Jose section of San Juan, 58-year-old Umberto Antonio Guzman leans against a chain-link fence watching baseball practice.

It's just after sunset, but the tropical air is still hot and sticky.

Guzman says he knows about Zika, and adds that he should be worried about it — but he's not. He says this outbreak isn't as bad as when Puerto Rico got hit in 2014 by chikungunya, another tropical disease new to the island.

"The chikungunya was very strong," Guzman says. "A lot stronger than Zika. With Zika many people don't even have any symptoms."

Just a few weeks ago, Guzman's 15-year-old son, who's out on the baseball field playing third base, had a bad case of dengue fever.

Guzman shrugs and says Zika is just one more health problem people here have to deal with.

Puerto Rico had its first Zika case in December of last year. Since then, laboratories have confirmed nearly 9,000 more cases in the commonwealth and U.S. territory.

Health officials say the actual number of people who have contracted the virus is much higher. One sign that's true is that almost 2 percent of blood donations in Puerto Rico are now turning up positive for Zika.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention predicts that by the end of the year more than 20 percent of the entire population — or some 700,000 people in Puerto Rico — could be exposed to the virus.

"Among us scientists, it is scary," says Brenda Rivera Garcia, the state epidemiologist for Puerto Rico. She says this is the first time she's ever seen a mosquito-borne virus that's capable of crossing the placenta and causing major birth defects. In extreme cases, the virus is being linked

to microcephaly in newborns. And then, as if all that wasn't bad enough, she says, Zika also turns out to be a sexually transmitted disease.

"This is something you would imagine if you were writing science fiction — but it's the reality," Rivera Garcia says. Even though, in some cases, the Zika virus causes only mild symptoms, or none at all, she says, it's clear that's not true for everyone. "We know that there are serious consequences for some in our population."

Yet it's difficult to get many people in Puerto Rico to pay attention to the risks, she and others working to curb the damage say.

"Zika is a problem and we are aware of it," says Hiram Torres Montalvo, a public interest lawyer and the co-founder of Puerto Rico Limpio, a citizens' action group that aims to clean up environmental hazards in Puerto Rico. Torres has been trying to raise awareness about mosquitoes spawning in open landfills. But he says sometimes people in the commonwealth just don't have time to think about Zika.

"We have so many problems in Puerto Rico," Torres Montalvo says. "Our economy is bad. We have a lot of crime, a lot of social issues, public debt, problems with the government. I think that we are so overwhelmed by all the problems that we have in Puerto Rico, that maybe we don't pay as much attention as we should to the Zika situation."

One thing that did get a lot of attention recently, in regards to Zika, was a plan backed by the CDC for aerial spraying of insecticide to combat the virus. Residents were furious. The mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico, called it "environmental terror," and the governor eventually blocked it.

Ralph Rivera Gutierrez, dean of the graduate school of public health at the University of Puerto Rico, is still irate about the proposed aerial spraying.

"To go and spray the entire country, based on the limited scientific evidence of the association [between Zika and microcephaly] — that is outrageous to us," Rivera Gutierrez says.

He's speaking with me at a community cleanup event in the Puerta de Tierra section of San Juan that is aimed at thwarting Zika. Volunteers and municipal workers are clearing out trash from a vacant lot to try to get rid of mosquito breeding grounds.

I ask Rivera Gutierrez if he sees Zika as a major problem for Puerto Rico. "Major?" he answers, and ponders the term. He looks skeptical. "I'll say it is a problem," he says.

Gutierrez says the government is Washington wants to "spray us." That phrase — "spray us" — is repeated a lot in Puerto Rico by opponents to the aerial spraying plan. Residents' response to Zika and their resistance to aerial spraying should be seen within a political context, he says, in which many Puerto Ricans distrust the U.S. government.

"We are an invaded country," Gutierrez says. "We've been a colony of the U.S. for 118 years, and there's been a lot of experimentation done on us. And so people have had enough of that."

The pesticide that was going to be sprayed — Naled — is an organophosphate that has been used in Puerto Rico in the past during dengue outbreaks. Also, Naled is currently being sprayed in Miami-Dade County, Fla., to try to address the spread of Zika there. Rivera Gutierrez points out correctly, however, that Naled is no longer approved for use in the European Union. And, he says, in the case of Zika, the proposal to spray the insecticide in Puerto Rico was an overreaction.

"We don't understand it, except for what might be some economic interest in getting rid of that product," Rivera Gutierrez says.

Amid the heat, the heavy summer rains and the skepticism in Puerto Rico, the Zika virus continues to spread — making people sick and possibly harming hundreds of babies who will be born in the months to come

Expected Spike in Zika Cases

El Nuevo Dia

By: Marga Parés Arroyo

August 11, 2016

CDC experts anticipate Zika virus infections will further rise in the next three months, due to heavy rain and the increase of mosquito breeding sites.

By the end of the year, one-fourth of the population of Puerto Rico (850,000 people) will become infected with the Zika virus, an estimate that surpasses the initial projections anticipated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Even though last week's announcement showed the first decrease in Zika infections since the so-called "silent epidemic" started, new cases are expected to rise in the next three months, due to the rainy season and an increase in mosquito breeding sites, as well as the back to school season and the possibility of more infections among students.

The apparent apathy in Puerto Rico regarding the use of insect repellent and condoms—two ways of preventing the virus—has resulted in a growing concern to the authorities who are looking for a way to implement a series of preventive measures in the hopes of controlling the virus that has been taking over the island since last year.

Even though there had been 8,766 confirmed cases by July 21, including 901 pregnant women, the actual amount of Zika infections in Puerto Rico is much greater. Many cases are not reported since they are individual clinical diagnosis made by doctors. Meanwhile, in other cases, the infected persons don't know they have the virus because 8 out of every 10 infections do not present any symptoms.

Still, it is estimated that about 500 to 700 samples of suspicious cases arrive daily to the laboratories of the Department of Health and the CDC Dengue Branch, located in Puerto Nuevo.

70% of these cases come back positive, although 45% of the processed samples are pregnant women presenting symptoms and 7% are pregnant women that don't have any symptoms.

This is the CDC's outlook on Puerto Rico, as reported yesterday Dr. Francisco Alvarado Ramy, sub-manager of Zika Response, a CDC program created last March in Puerto Rico to develop a series of initiatives as a way to try and stop this disease.

"It (Zika) first appeared in the eastern part of the island, and it later moved to the metropolitan area and then Ponce and Peñuelas. Right now it is present in all 78 municipalities," Alvarado Ramy reported.

The Risk of Guillain-Barre

Although 27 cases of Guillain-Barre Syndrome caused by Zika have been reported, the actual figure could be much higher because it is not in the list of reportable diseases of the Department of Health, as acknowledged the epidemiologist who several years ago was head of the Epidemiology Section of the Department of Health. "Currently, Guillain-Barre is on the west side. We need to start taking preventive measures (over there)," he stated.

The Guillain-Barre Syndrome is an autoimmune disorder that happens when the body's defense (immune) system mistakenly attacks part of the nervous system. This leads to nerve inflammation that causes muscle weakness or paralysis, among other symptoms.

In Puerto Rico, more than 50% of reported Guillain-Barre cases caused by Zika have developed respiratory problems.

"Aside from the problems (caused by Zika) to pregnant women (due to the risk of having babies with congenital defects), the biggest threat are Guillain-Barre Syndrome cases," argued Alvarado Ramy.

Just in the week of July 15-21, date of the last Arboviruses Weekly Report, four cases of this syndrome were reported.

“If the person feels tingling or weakness one week after Zika symptoms, they should visit their doctor,” said the epidemiologist, who added that these cases are usually treated by neurologists, internists or emergency physicians that treat these patients in emergency rooms.

Dangerous Population Density

According to recent reports, women between ages 30 to 39, pregnant women between ages 20 and 29, and young men between 10 and 19 years old have been the main targets of the virus.

“The cases are concentrated in areas with a high population density,” said Alvarado Ramy.

Until now, Ponce, Toa Baja, Bayamón, Guaynabo, San Juan, Carolina, and Caguas are the cities with the most confirmed cases.

“It is a challenge but, as a society, we must raise awareness and think about the mother's womb. There lays the greatest danger,” he declared.

So far, the Health Department has confirmed one case of microcephaly in a fetus and two miscarriages of virus-infected fetuses. It is anticipated that the first babies affected with the virus will be born on the island beginning in October.

Meanwhile, in the United States, the first baby with microcephaly was born in May in New Jersey. It has been said that the mother of the infant, a 31-year-old woman, was infected with the virus while on a two-day trip to Honduras.

Use of Insect Repellent Strongly Encouraged

The internist and epidemiologist regretted that Puerto Rico does not have an “insect-repellent-wearing culture,” perhaps, he said, because Puerto Ricans are used to living with mosquitoes.

Because of the island’s history with *Aedes aegypti*, Alvarado Ramy recognized that many mosquitoes have developed resistance to insecticides.

“The use of (insecticides with the ingredient) Deltamethrin is recommended in terrestrial sprayings,” he said.

Regarding aerial spraying, he said that after the government rejected Naled he abandoned the idea of spraying with the BTI (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*) larvicide, because using it that way proved ineffective.

He explained that they have been using BTI on land, in pills or in liquid form.

Regarding insect repellents, he warned that they should have the ingredient known as DEET in a ratio of 20 to 25%, but no more than 50%.

Aside from DEET, other insect repellents approved by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are Picaridin, IR3535, and eucalyptus-lime oil or p-menthane-3-diol.

However, Eucalyptus oil cannot be used on children under three years of age, while insect repellent shouldn’t be used on a baby under two months old.

In addition to the more traditional spraying method, there are also repellents in cream or gel form, as well as wet wipes with repellent.

It is recommended that infected people use repellent to avoid infecting the people around them.

Struggling Against the Virus

The Department of Health has passed out small bags with items to prevent infection, both among pregnant women as well as for the general population. The items include insect repellent lotions and wet wipes, 22 condoms, mosquito nets, donut-shaped larvicides with BTI, and reading material on how to protect oneself from the Zika virus.

In addition, alongside the federal and state Department of Housing, metal wire meshes have been installed in public housing projects.

Moreover, \$501,000 have been invested in a tire shredder machine that should arrive in the country in four months time, according to Alvarado Ramy.

Meanwhile, starting in September, mosquito traps (Autocidal Gravid Ovitrap) will be installed in several communities in Caguas, one of the cities with the largest number of confirmed Zika cases.

According to the epidemiologist, these traps were tested in a pilot project in the cities of Salinas and Guayama at the end of last year. Dr. Roberto Barrera of the CDC Dengue Branch was in charge of the project that used three traps for each of the houses where the product was tested.

“We are going to build them (the traps) right here in Puerto Rico, about 15,000 a week. We add water and hay to the traps so that they decompose and attract the mosquitoes,” reported Alvarado Ramy.

We are also going to buy other traps made in Holland (In2care). These traps, that use a type of fungus to attract the mosquitos and impregnate them with larvicide, will be used in Patillas and Arroyo.

Opponents of Seneca Gas Storage Project Reject Downsize Plan

Associated Press

By: Mary Esch

August 11, 2016

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Opponents of a proposed propane storage facility in the Finger Lakes say they'll continue to fight the project despite the company's proposal to downsize it in response to community concerns.

In a letter to the Department of Environmental Conservation on Monday, Houston-based Crestwood Midstream Partners proposed changes to the Seneca Lake project that include elimination of rail and truck shipment facilities, no butane storage, and resources to monitor and improve water quality in the lake.

In response to public comments about noise, air pollution, potential accidents and increased traffic related to rail and truck shipments to and from the storage site, Crestwood proposes to transport propane only through the existing Teppco pipeline.

"We're pleased to have collaborated with local stakeholders to support modifications that reduce our project's impact on the environment, while still helping propane consumers and creating jobs and tax base for local communities," Crestwood Vice President Brad Bacon said Wednesday.

The opposition group Gas Free Seneca, which includes numerous winemakers in the region, said in a statement that it is resolved to stop the project completely, saying it's unsafe and inconsistent with the character of Seneca Lake communities.

"A fossil fuel project in abandoned salt caverns along a drinking water resource for 100,000 people, with serious unresolved questions about cavern integrity, salinization of the lake, risks of fire, explosion, and in the midst of a global climate crisis, is profoundly unacceptable, despite the changes proposed by Crestwood," Joseph Campbell, president of Gas Free Seneca, said Wednesday.

The Department of Environmental Conservation has been considering a permit application for the propane storage facility since 2009. DEC spokesman Sean Mahar said Wednesday the agency will consider the proposed changes in the administrative hearing process currently underway.

The Schuyler County Legislature passed a resolution Monday night urging Gov. Andrew Cuomo to allow DEC to approve the project. Thirty-two other municipalities around Seneca Lake have passed resolutions opposing Crestwood's plans.

A separate permit for expansion of natural gas storage in lakeside salt caverns has received Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approval, but Crestwood sought and received a two-year extension in May. Since FERC approved the expansion in October 2014, hundreds of protesters have been arrested for blocking Crestwood's gates to prevent construction from proceeding.

Editorial: EPA Farm Pesticide Rules Update N.J.'s Solid Oversight

The Press of Atlantic City

August 10, 2016

Federal rules protecting farmworkers from pesticide exposure will be strengthened next year, improving New Jersey's already good standards and practices. The biggest single change will be increasing the minimum age for applying pesticides from 16 to 18.

New Jersey has been ahead of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. When the federal rules on pesticide exposure last were toughened 24 years ago, the state took the opportunity to provide better protections to those working on farms.

Among the improvements then, which are included in the new nationwide EPA standards, were pesticide education and safety-training requirements. Since many of the 13,000 N.J. workers on farms have come from nations where pesticide awareness is weak, knowing the risks and how to minimize them is essential.

Here's one example: Fruits or vegetables might have been recently treated, so they need to be washed before being consumed, which makes eating them in the field while working dangerous.

New Jersey already required farms to post lists of when fields were sprayed, what pesticides were used and when it is safe to return to those fields. The state also required farms to provide water, soap and towels close to the fields. And its record-keeping requirement remains stronger than the new EPA rules.

Besides increasing the age of pesticide handlers and those entering treated fields early, the EPA's Worker Protection Standard is mandating training annually instead of every five years; requiring training before working in the fields, as opposed to within five days; and establishing better respirator practices and medical evaluations when using the riskiest half of the 3,500 pesticides in agriculture today.

This all makes for added work and costs for farms, which in fairness are more reasons for not keeping the family farm going. Of New Jersey's 9,000 farms, only about 1,500 are large commercial enterprises.

The need for pesticide education and oversight has long been apparent in South Jersey's agricultural industry. In the past 20 years in the region, handling pesticides without training has been suspected in cases ranging from worker dizziness to birth defects in workers' children.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension's state Pesticide Safety office will work with county agricultural agents to distribute educational materials and offer workshops for farmers on the updated regulations. Other education efforts will be handled by the N.J. Farm Bureau and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency.

This newspaper supported the state's strengthening of the rules two decades ago. It now welcomes the new incremental improvements. We believe the benefits continue to outweigh the added burden on farms.

With the EPA estimating that there are 2,000 to 3,000 preventable cases of pesticide exposure each year nationwide, stronger rules that are uniformly applied across the country are another step toward a healthy harvest.

Pompton Lake Restoration Committee Seeks Volunteers

Suburban Trends

By: Leslie Scott

August 9, 2016

POMPTON LAKES - Despite the ongoing cleanup of the contaminants a few steps away, the Pompton Lake Restoration Committee is still keeping an eye on the rest of the lake.

The committee continued the seasonal algae treatment this summer, and on Saturday, Aug. 20, it will host the third annual cleanup of Pompton Lake.

Committee member Steve Grayberg said several residents have agreed to volunteer, and the committee is looking for more to come out and help.

Volunteers will be tasked with walking around the lake to pick up trash, and some will be in boats pulling out debris.

Grayberg said one year they pulled a chemical toilet out from the water.

Last weekend, Grayberg said they walked the perimeter of the lake to look for any areas they should focus on. He said they did make a priority list, but all-in-all, the lake "is really not all that bad."

This cleanup was sanctioned by the Borough Council, which is picking up the cost of the project. Grayberg said the costs include purchasing trash bags and refreshments.

Volunteers should arrive at Lakeside Park by 10 a.m. for assignments, and they will go out in teams of at least two people.

The cleanup is scheduled to conclude by 1 p.m. when pizza and refreshments will be served.

Letter: Sierra Club Applauds Jersey City for Investing in Open Space

The Jersey Journal

By: Jeff Tittel

August 10, 2016

We are proud to stand by Mayor Fulop and the Jersey City Council as they promoting a referendum to dedicate funding to open space in Jersey City. The citizens of Jersey City will be able to vote on a small property tax increase to get \$1.2 million a year for open space projects. These projects will include building parks and playgrounds. This is incredibly important because

is investing in parks is investing in our cities' future. Dedicating open space funds is a win-win for the people and environment of Jersey City.

Playgrounds, tot-lots, open space and parks are an important part of any city's infrastructure. Parks and open space not only help the environment but they improve our health and quality of life. Parks also add vitality to neighborhoods and encourage investment and redevelopment. Parks are an important part of our lives and communities and in many cases are the focal points of our neighborhoods. When you build new parks and fix older ones, you spur investment in the neighborhoods around those parks. You see houses being fixed up and new developments being built.

Increasing open space such as parks and playgrounds leads to healthier communities. You see less obesity and more opportunities for exercise and people will live longer. These are places for people to get together and foster community relationships which helps to break down the walls of isolation within the city. Cities also benefit economically from increased open spaces because they lead to redevelopment and make homes in that community more valuable. Houses next to parks are up to 20% higher in value than those not near parks.

In the state has highest property taxes in the nation, more than 250 towns and all 21 counties voters have overwhelmingly approved raising property taxes to fund open space. They understand how vitally important it is to have places where they can get together with their children and neighbors to play, recreate, or just enjoy the outdoors. A small increase in fees goes a long way when it comes to improving the lives and health of our families and the environment of our communities. Green Acres has a state match program for local trust funds. For urban areas you're supposed to get \$3 from the state for every \$1 you put up. This means that \$1.2 million could potentially be \$4.8 million. Even if the state can't provide all of this, they will still provide a match.

This funding can be used to turn brownfields into greenfields. It can be used to provide places for children and adults both to play and enjoy nature. It will encourage exercise and an appreciation for our environment. They will make neighborhoods more likely to become fixed up and redeveloped. Creating open space can invigorate a community and everyone who lives in it. We applaud Mayor Fulop and the Jersey City City Council for going forward to support this initiative.

JEFF TITTEL

NEW JERSEY SIERRA CLUB

Frustrated Feds: 'What is up with NJ' Avoiding Sandy Money for Roxbury Landfill?

NJ.com

By: Louis C. Hochman

August 11, 2016

ROXBURY — Federal officials threw their hands up in frustration — figuratively and pictorially — last year after New Jersey turned down help securing Sandy relief funds to monitor the foul-smelling Fenimore landfill.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency staff emails — obtained by NJ.com this week — are significant because they appear to show the EPA took seriously the possibility Sandy had something to do with the smells at Fenimore, which many in the community blame for causing respiratory problems and other ill effects. It's a theory long advocated by the site's owner, but never backed by state authorities.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection approached the EPA in late 2012 about using a Superfund program to monitor the site, according to the emails, first obtained by Fenimore's owner and provided to NJ.com. Foul-smelling hydrogen sulfide had begun spreading through town just months earlier, and residents were beginning to complain.

But the EPA said Superfund funding wasn't a good fit — and instead offered to support the DEP if it pursued funding for superstorm Sandy relief through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, according to the emails. The DEP turned down the offer of help, the emails show.

"What is up with NJ?" Meghan La Reau of the EPA's Region 2 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Compliance Branch wrote on Jan. 9 of last year. "I would love to know why they made this decision."

The Hazardous Waste Compliance Section Chief for the branch, Lenny Voo, drew a stick figure in response.

"That's me throwing my arms up in the air," he wrote. "After Dore (LaPosta, director of the Division of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance) came into my office to ask me to work on this, and after dozens of phone calls ... again ... they change their minds. I don't know if communications broke down or what."

Eric Mosher, the EPA chief of the Response and Prevention Branch for Region 2, had said in an earlier email the EPA already had a mission assignment in place that could cover the work.

"The state just needs to make the request," he wrote. "Once again they have been reluctant to do so because of the cost share issue. This issue is Sandy related so the state submitting a request to FEMA for the work would be appropriate."

The emails do not, however, cite evidence of a connection between Fenimore and Sandy, and not all the emails suggest it's a firm conclusion.

"I was surprised NJ didn't originally think this could be covered under the hurricane," La Reau wrote in January of 2013. "Supposedly, the landfill has been taking hurricane debris. The material was soaked with sea water, and someone believed this may be causing the H₂S smell. Of course, this is coming from the citizens so it may not be valid."

Bernardi has been arguing Sandy's to blame for the smells since last year, when the DEP took over the landfill. His company, SEP, had been bringing construction debris to the long-abandoned landfill under a DEP-approved plan to properly cap it and install a solar facility.

The DEP contends SEP mismanaged the project and faults Bernardi for not putting money into a required escrow account. But Bernardi says he only brought in material from DEP-approved recycling centers.

And much of that material, he says, came in drenched from Sandy. An engineer Bernardi employed for the project testified during a municipal court hearing last year debris came to the Fenimore site wet, speeding hydrogen sulfide releases as it broke down in the landfill site, and causing the smells.

Bernardi also notes the DEP waived a licensing requirement companies typically must have to collect or haul solid waste when New Jersey awarded a no-bid contract to politically connected AshBritt Inc. for emergency Sandy cleanup, as previously reported by the Star-Ledger. But he acknowledged he can't point to any specific evidence suggesting material was handled properly.

Roxbury officials have also lent support to the Sandy theory, saying the state should pursue FEMA funds and perhaps use them to remove the hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of debris SEP brought in. The DEP has repeatedly rejected that plan, saying it would be costly and expose Roxbury and surrounding communities to hydrogen sulfide releases more extreme than they've ever experienced. The state agency met with municipal officials in several communities recently to deliver that message.

"Gov. Chris Christie reiterated the state's stance in an exchange with an emotional Andover resident at a Fairfield town hall meeting earlier this week.

"Let me just make it really plain and simple to you," Christie said after the resident told the governor he wanted debris trucked out of Fenimore. "I'm not doing it under any circumstances."

SEP had been hauling in construction debris for about nine months before residents began filing odor complaints in November of 2012, shortly after the late-October superstorm.

But the DEP has never publicly backed the Sandy theory. DEP representatives said at a meeting

with Roxbury residents last month that they believe the smells started to become apparent in November 2012 because it took months for the debris to break down and a critical mass of hydrogen sulfide to build up underground. At that meeting, the DEP presented its own plan to cap the landfill with a geomembrane cover, despite the objections of angry residents chanting "truck it out" and singing protest songs.

Bernardi said he believes the DEP turned away the EPA's offer for help because it would amount to an acknowledgment of his argument about Sandy.

"Why in the hell wouldn't the DEP say, 'If you're going to give out billions of dollars in Sandy money, give us some of that Sandy money?' Why would the DEP turn down any money?" he said.

DEP spokesman Larry Ragonese said his agency explored a number of options for the cleanup and monitoring of Fenimore, and described the outreach to the EPA as "nothing formal."

"It was exploratory," he said. "Some of the material might have come from — and it's not exactly determined how much — from Sandy recovery efforts. So there was a thought that there could be some kind of a Sandy connection for funding. But we were having informational discussions on various possibilities."

Ragonese said he "wouldn't read anything into those emails."

"These were general discussions about the potential options, that's all," he said.

LaPosta, director of the Division of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance, said in a September email that the DEP didn't want the EPA involved in Fenimore "because it is before the court."

Bernardi is locked in litigation with the DEP on several fronts over the Fenimore takeover, and

over funding the cleanup. He said he doesn't anticipate the EPA emails will help his court cases.

"Nobody cares, any of this stuff," he said. "I've still got a problem with Christie, and I've still got a problem with the DEP."

Company Street Waterline Work About to Start

St. Croix Source

August 8, 2016

The V.I. Water and Power Authority is scheduled to begin the first phase of the Christiansted Rehabilitation Project on Company Street in Christiansted town Tuesday and work is expected to continue until Nov. 14, according to WAPA.

The news comes a few days after Senate President Neville James sent WAPA a notice asking for the timeline on the work, following up on a July 13 committee hearing.

"The current condition of the road makes it very difficult to commute daily through the area where much of the work has taken place," James wrote.

The delay on the work is hurting Christiansted business, according to James. And the work is needed.

"I believe WAPA's effort to replace all of the cast iron piping throughout the entire distribution system will serve as a solution to the many problems residents have been struggling with for years in regards to potable water," James said, adding that he looks forward to "the increased economic activity and viability of Christiansted for its businesses, visitors and residents alike which the road improvements will bring."

The project will include the replacement of 1,800 linear feet of waterline along Company Street, between the Christiansted cemetery and the Church Street intersection. It is funded through the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.

The project total for this contract is \$299,500 and the contract has been awarded to V.I. Paving, Inc. to complete the waterline installation and roadway compaction.

More information about this project is available by sending an e-mail to communications@viwapa.vi.

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